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1920 "FAR COUNTRIES"

D. B. BUCHANAN

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“FAR COUNTRIES”

"FAR COUNTRIES"

SIMPLE ADDRESSES ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

BY

D. E. BUCHANAN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE

REV. G. C. RAWLINSON

OF S. BARNABAS, PIMLICO



LONDON

**SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
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**TO THE MEMBERS
OF ST. MARY'S GUILD, CHRIST CHURCH, HOXTON
AND TO THEIR LEADER
THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED**

PREFACE

THIS little book claims no originality, but is rather the result of a good deal of reading put into simple words to try to meet the needs of a few hard workers. It originated in a series of addresses given to St. Mary's Guild, Christ Church, Hoxton, from Shrove Tuesday to Holy Week, 1919.

For many ideas I am indebted to The Rev. A. H. McNeile's *After this Manner Pray Ye*, and to the Rev. F. W. Isaacs' *Thoughts on the Temptation of our Lord*.

D. E. B.

INTRODUCTION

THIS little book had its origin in an attempt to help the members of a North London Guild to learn the elements of prayer and devotion. It is now published in the hope that it may be useful to a larger audience. There is need of work like this. The English poor have largely lost the habit of prayer. It is cruelly humiliating sometimes, on our visits abroad, to notice that this is not always the case elsewhere. Why should a street-seller in Havre, for instance, be more ready to drop into a church for a few minutes' rest and prayer than a London costermonger? Is it because the latter, though he may have been told to pray, has never been taught how? For the poor have more capacity for devotion than everyone recognizes. There is no need to be surprised at this. Riches and comfort, if the Gospels are true, are far more serious hindrances than straitness of circumstances. Many of the poor might easily be trained, I believe, in affective prayer, even, perhaps, in the elements of contemplation. In their religion there is nearly always an under-

current of mysticism. They want the idea of God as their Friend : as One Whom they can approach by a direct experience.

It is worth while to consider this for a moment. Baron Friedrich von Hügel has pointed out that there are three elements in religion : the institutional ; the intellectual or rational ; and the mystical or experimental. With the poor it is the mystical which predominates. The preacher to whom they listen most willingly is the preacher who, like Father Stanton or the Curé of Ars, is never tired of dwelling on the Love of God and the possibility of knowing God. Modernism, with its appeal to the intellect, leaves them cold. It takes them into an icy region where they cannot breathe, or, perhaps one should say, where they are as little at home as they would be if they strayed into the lecture-room of a Regius Professor. The *Hibbert Journal* is not for the poor. Neither does institutional religion, when all the stress is laid on the institutions, particularly appeal to them. But the mystical element does. The lives of the poor are very bare of interests once youth is past. They consist often just of a round of hard and monotonous toil, with dissipation, in one form or another, as the only outlet. But the habit of prayer, if it is formed, is the golden key which opens a door into a new and glorious world.

The desire of the author of this book is, I said, to teach girls to pray. That is to begin in the right place, for you will never get girls—or anyone else, for that matter—to perform their other religious duties unless they have first learned this. Work among adolescents is notoriously difficult. Disappointments are many, especially, perhaps, in London. For the London adolescent, if quickly won in the first instance, is just as quickly lost. But, on the other hand, there are few works that repay one more usuriously. Youth is the generous age. Conversions, as the American psychologists tell us, are more frequently obtained then than in later years. Selfishness which, like a sea fog spreading over the sand-hills, often envelops middle life, has not yet become a habit. Those who followed our Saviour in Galilee were, it seems, nearly all poor and nearly all young. And the prodigal Son, of whose journey Miss Buchanan makes here such attractive use, was, I think we all feel, not much more than a boy. Those who work among the young are richly privileged.

G. C. RAWLINSON.

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SHROVE TUESDAY

"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

"But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet."—ST. LUKE xv. 21, 22.

“ I WILL ARISE ”

I SUPPOSE that all of you who read this little book have been baptised, you are soldiers of Christ, enlisted to fight under the Banner of the Cross. But I want to think that you are trying to be something more than soldiers of Christ, I want to think that you are trying to be His Friends. The soldiers of the British Army in the recent European War won a name for their loyalty to their King, but just some soldiers of that Army have come to be known as something further—they have come to be recognised as the personal friends of their commander, men who were ready to follow their leader through fierce fighting, the hardest obstacles, the greatest difficulties, through—if it need be—death.

It was comparatively easy for us in Advent to prepare to welcome the little Child ; it was even easier at Christmas time to give our hearts as a Birthday present to the Babe of Bethlehem. Some of us, perhaps, went to churches where there was a crib, and if we did, then I think we realised the Christmas joy and the Christmas Gift as never before. There we saw the Saviour of the World lying on the straw, with His Mother and St. Joseph and the Shepherds kneeling round, and we felt that, like them, we must try always to stay close to Him. Then at Epiphany-tide our thoughts still dwelt on the Holy Child, and with the Wise

Men we offered Him our hearts' devotion, gold and frankincense and myrrh. "Gold of obedience and incense of holiness, these are the offerings" we laid at His Shrine. But now we come to this season of Lent, and our thoughts have to turn away from the Holy Child to the Suffering Man, and it is only those who are at all costs determined to be the friends of Jesus who will follow Him loyally through the forty days of His temptation, who will be able to share the agony of His Passion, and to watch Him die—and yet it is only those who are going to make up their minds to follow His sufferings, and to watch Him die on Good Friday, who can hope to share the glory of the Resurrection Easter Life.

All the seasons are meant to teach us something about the Christian Life. Advent reminds us of the Last Judgment; Christmas of the Birth of Christ; Epiphany, the guidance of the Star which led the Wise Men to offer their gifts; Easter tells of the life to come, Whitsun of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. But this season of Lent is so much misunderstood. We have become accustomed on Shrove Tuesday to look forward to to-morrow with rather a wry face, as beginning six weeks which are to be very dull, which we chiefly associate—at any rate, we used to before the war—with giving up the sugar in our tea, or the jam on our butter. But Lent is something quite different from that. Lent comes in the spring, the Season of Hope, with its thought of the coming of summer, and Lent too speaks of hope and restoration: it is the six quiet weeks given to us to return from the Far Country, to

renew our intercourse with God. You will remember how, in the story of the Prodigal Son, he came back to his father from a far country.

Most of us know some one who is in a far country. Many of us have relations or friends in far countries. Some have only just gone there—some have been away many years—some still hold communication with us—but as time goes on their letters become shorter, less interesting, because they have been away so long that they have lost touch—got out of touch with us. They have almost forgotten England, and their friends, and lost all desire to come back.

So it is with us—we are all, more or less, in a spiritual Far Country. Our Far Country is just that part of our life which we are keeping for ourselves and withholding from God. We have to find it, to recognise it, and to come away from it. Is there any single one of us who can say that we are living close to Jesus Christ—that we have not left Him? Some may be in a farther off country than others; there are all sorts of far countries.

There is a Far Country of Pride and Anger, separated by mountains from the God of Love. There is the Far Country of Untruthfulness, separated from the God of Truth by an abyss of lies; there is the Far Country of Self-indulgence; the Far Country of Dishonesty. Some are only a very little way off perhaps; some have not been home since last Lent when they made so many good resolutions and broke them so quickly; and some perhaps have cut off almost all communication and have never been all the way home since their Baptism many years ago, when they were

made God's children. We may be fairly close—we may be moving nearer; we may be very far away—we may be moving farther away; but there is no country so far off that we cannot journey back, there is no country so far off but we shall find Our Father with His arms open to receive us—coming to meet us. It may be only a day's journey, it may take six weeks, and here are the six weeks given us to use for our journey.

In the recent terrible years of war there was so much to do, there was so much to think of, there was so much anxiety, that even in Lent we had little time to think of ourselves, and the Church herself realised that, and relaxed rules for us, dispensed with them, and bade us rather to pause than to try to climb to fresh heights.

But now surely we are to be more strenuous, more stern with ourselves; to set apart a definite time for God, to set our thoughts upon coming closer to Jesus, our Friend, upon following Him through His temptation, and in His Passion; to find out what is wanting and to ask Him to help us to gain it; to find out what there is in us that we do not want, that we ought not to have, and to lay it at the Foot of His Cross on Good Friday as a thank-offering for His mercies to us in these past years of war.

Taking, as we always seem to do nowadays, the Great European War as an illustration, what happened? After nearly four and a half years of bloodshed an Armistice was declared, and the Allies engaged for some time in a careful searching-out of the surest foundations for a lasting Peace, before that Peace was finally signed. So with the

lives of our souls—on Ash Wednesday we are going to declare an Armistice, we are going to lay down our arms, and cease to fight against God, we are going to start on our journey back from our Far Country to fight under His banner. Those of you who have been confirmed will meet at the Holy Communion Service to-morrow morning with one great Intention, that in the six weeks between now and Easter Day you will spend the time in finding the surest foundations for a lasting Peace, and that you will journey back from your Far Country and sign that Peace. Do your very utmost to come and start Ash Wednesday at the Altar, because that is just why we have a celebration of the Holy Communion on the first morning of Lent, that we may bring our resolutions and make them there in His Presence ; so that, instead of trying to keep them by ourselves, we may take with us that special strength which He Himself will come there to give us, which will help us to be loyal and true, and will guide and feed us on our journey closer to Him. We all want to find out exactly what we have been fighting about, what God's claims on us are, how we have been resisting them, and what changes we have to make so that we can conclude a perfect and, if possible, a lasting Peace with Him. And just as, in every branch of life, after the war a great reconstruction began and is still taking place, so in these weeks of Lent, as we follow Jesus in His sufferings and in His death, we have so to reconstruct our lives, so to throw away what needs to be got rid of, so to plant what needs to take root in us that in our preparation for our Easter

Communion we may be able to make a complete, a perfect Peace.

Most of us know what it was to welcome friends and relations back from the fighting; wounded maybe, or prisoners perhaps of whom we had scarcely heard for months, and in many cases years. No offering what we can bring to God can be too great to show our thanks and gratitude—let it be that offering which He desires beyond everything—our souls and bodies, our return to Him from a Far Country.

Others of us—for in every parish, in every street, nay, in almost every home, there must be some who all through the peace rejoicings must have heard the note of sadness—others of us lost someone dear to them in that Great War. They too must bring an offering of thankfulness; they too must give thanks that they have been allowed to bear one splinter of His Cross; they too must strain every nerve to give Him that perfect offering of themselves, their souls and bodies, since, as it has been said: " They mourn best who live as the dead desire." And surely those dear dead who have looked on Jesus, as they pray for us—as we feel quite sure that they do pray—desire for us perfection, desire for us that with them we may reach the Highest Mansion quickly.

But again, just because we have reached once more the days of peace, we must not only be thankful, we must be prepared. These men of ours, as they returned how did they find us? Have they come back to the same England that they left? Have they come back to the same Church, the same homes? I hope not. We want them,

surely we want them to find England a better England, a purer England, to find their Church a more living Church, and their homes better, holier homes, and it rests with each one of us, the girls and women of England, to see to it that through the personal influence of each English woman England is a better England, that through the Christ-likeness of each individual member of of the Christian Church they may find the Church has become more Christ-like ; it is through the individual care and love and influence of each member of the home that they will find their homes happier, because more holy. So as a great act of Thanksgiving for the cessation of the fighting, and as a great act of Preparation for the hard-won days of Peace, let each one of us separately and together try as we have never tried before in any past Lent to strive after a closer intimacy—a more real friendship with Jesus Christ ; and then as we gain that closer friendship, as we journey back towards Him, as we see revealed before us His Perfection, it must surely follow that we shall realise our own unworthiness and shall come to see where we fall short of that Perfection, what it is that is keeping us from it.

And so to-night each one of us is going to think before she goes to sleep, to find out what is her Far Country, and then to start off to-morrow morning with a glad heart on the return journey. The very meaning of Shrove Tuesday brings to our minds first a feeling of sadness but then a feeling of gladness. For in the olden days it was the custom for every one to go to the Priest and be shriven ; that means to confess their sins, so as to make a fresh

start on Ash Wednesday ; and then, being full of all the joy of Absolution and with the prospect before them of a glad return to holiness, they used to dine off pancakes and make merry. If we are going to keep Lent well, we must not be vague, we must be definite. We have to find out—as His friends—how intimate we are with Jesus Christ, and what it is that is in the way of our being a closer friend, and that we must do, individually each one for herself. And we must offer it to Him to-night, and ask His forgiveness, and then start off to conquer it to-morrow. But there is one special Far Country that we are going to think about all together—and that is the Far Country of our Prayers.

I do not think there is any one of us who will dare to say that her prayers are as good as they might be—and prayer is just the one and only way in which we can come to know God better. Prayer is intercourse with God. Prayer is the soul's converse with God, and it is just this intercourse that is broken off when we go into a Far Country. There is one special way in which friends come to know each other better, and that is by talking together. We may like the look of people, we may admire what we read of people, so that we feel we would give anything to talk to them, and then, when at last we do talk to them, we find we want to do everything we can for them, and the more we talk to them, and the more we listen to what they say, the more we love them ; and then it follows that the more we love them the more we shall want to serve them, and to give up anything and everything for them.

And it is so with friendship with God. We have heard of Him and we have loved what we have heard of Him, but we very seldom talk to Him, and so we do not know all we might know about Him. And just because we want to know more about Him, therefore we want to talk to Him more. And not only perhaps do we want to talk more, but we want to talk more intimately. We have talked to Him just as we do talk to someone we have not seen for a long time, someone who lives in a Far Country, and whom we do not know very well.

We have learnt perhaps to speak to God in prayer. We have learnt to ask Him for things, or better still, when we have done wrong we have learnt to tell Him we are sorry, and to ask Him to forgive. But there are so many other parts of prayer besides asking God for things, and after all when we tell Him we are sorry and ask Him to forgive, it is too often for ourselves only.

Prayer is not only talking to someone about ourselves, it is not only asking for forgiveness; prayer is intercourse—communion. We begin intercourse with a friend sometimes quite silently, do we not? Perhaps without saying a word, by just giving them a kiss, by putting our arms round their neck and holding them close. An old woman said once, "When I pray, I just look at God, and God looks at me." The Prodigal Son began to pray long before he said, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." He began to pray when he came near enough on his return journey home to kneel down, when he felt his father's arms around him, and the kiss on his forehead.

Do let us learn to start our prayers well, it will make all the difference to them. However little time we have to give to prayer, let us make up our minds that in the first minute of them, we will say nothing, that we will just look at God, as we know He is looking at us. And if you find it difficult to look at God with the eye of your soul, then have some picture of Him in front of you when you say your prayers and look at it, or best of all, take your crucifix or a picture of the Crucifixion and look at that until you can think of God and God alone, before you try to speak to Him.

So in these six weeks of self-searching, and of returning home, let us—whatever each one of us may find to do individually, in secret—let us together try to learn to pray, to pray more perhaps, but at any rate to pray better, to pray more reverently, to pray more unselfishly, to pray for those deeper, bigger things that He would have us pray for, and above all, and before all, to pray in Christ's Name, in union with Him.

In Christ's Name, in union with Him. There is the whole secret of good prayer, the magic key which will open for us the Gate of Heaven. He Himself said, " Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name," and again, " Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do." Have we asked anything in His Name? We all of us think we have; we have perhaps been specially careful to end our prayers with some such words as " For Jesus Christ's sake " or " for the love of Thine only Son our Lord," but what have those prayers been to which we have ventured to add His Name?

How often we have prayed a selfish prayer and closed it with the name of Him who is our Pattern of Unselfishness ! How often we have asked for something we know God cannot give us, in the Name of the All-Good ! How often have we asked to be forgiven for something which we know we mean to do again, and offered it with the Name of the Sinless One ! How often when we have been tempted, have we asked for a strength we know we are not going to use, in the Name of Him Who was strong even unto death, Who in the face of all temptation drove it away from Him, with a "Get thee behind me, Satan." No, to pray in Christ's Name, in union with Him, means something more than that. It is to try in some way however faintly, to have the mind of Christ when we pray ; to ask for those things which He would have us ask for, in the spirit in which He Himself would have asked for them, to pray for something if it be His Will, to pray for others even in the midst of our own need, as He did ; to ask forgiveness for our enemies as He asked it, even on the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." That is prayer in Christ's Name, that is prayer in union with Him, that is prayer in the Light of the Passion, and that is the sort of prayer that will have an answer, for He has promised it.

That is as far as we have time to go to-night in this first introductory chapter—next week we are going on to look once more at our prayers, and to try to understand better the Pattern Prayer He has given us—the Lord's Prayer, to try to pray more in the spirit of that Pattern Prayer, and to

see how Jesus Himself prayed, when He prayed, and how He prayed. Enough for to-night to make up our minds that we are going to leave the Far Country of our Prayers, to start on the return journey to better prayers, and that we are going to pray—above all in His name, with the will of Jesus, in union with Him. Make a very firm resolution that you are going to be more careful about your prayers, because you want to be closer friends with Jesus, and that is your one and only way of talking to Him. Have a very strong will about it. Wishing will make all sorts of excuses, willing will sweep them all away.

You know what a difference there is when you take a piece of whalebone in your hand, and when you take a piece of steel. The one wobbles, the other is quite firm. There is just the same difference between wishing and willing. “I will arise,” is the most strenuous sentence in the whole Bible, and all the more strenuous because it is entirely dependent on ourselves, and on our efforts. “*I will arise.*” So let us be more careful about our prayers. However little time we have for them, let us make up our minds that whatever our rule has been in the past about them we will make a better one and that we will keep it. We pray sometimes—sometimes we put it off. We pray when we feel like it, when we don’t feel like it we leave it. We are so often like the naughty little boy who when he was asked if he had said his evening prayers, pulled the bed-clothes over his head and said, “I did not forget them, I just did not say them.”

Lastly, let us remember *how* He prayed.

“ Apart,” and “ kneeling down.” In almost every recorded prayer of Jesus we are told that “ He went apart,” and that “ He knelt down.” So let us be more careful about how and where we say our prayers. Set apart some special time to talk to God, and if possible set apart some special place. If your homes are noisy and crowded and you cannot be alone, that is just why the doors of nearly all our Churches are left open in the daytime—that the friends of Jesus may have the opportunity to go into a place apart and kneel down. Above all, perhaps, some of you pass near a Church where the Blessed Sacrament is Reserved, and where you can go into a place apart from all the rest of the world, but where Jesus Himself is very specially present, and where even though you can find no words of your own you can—in union with Him there present—offer His own Pattern Prayer which He has given you to “ Our Father,” the Father of Jesus—but by His infinite Mercy and Goodness—through the Power of His Passion, by His death on the Cross, the Father of each one of us who is trying to know Him, and to be His friend.

“ Look, Father, look on His Anointed Face,
And only look on us as found in Him ;
Look not on our misusings of Thy grace,
Our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim.
For lo, between our sins and their reward
We set the Passion of Thy Son our Lord.”

II

FIRST WEEK IN LENT

“ One of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

“ And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father . . .”—ST. LUKE xi. 1, 2.

“ OUR FATHER ”

YOU will remember that last week we decided that we were going, during these six weeks of Lent, to think about the Far Country of our bad prayers. And we made up our minds to try to start them better, by trying to realise the presence of God ; to try to pray more reverently, more unselfishly, more for those deeper, bigger things that He would have us pray for, and above all that we would try to pray more in Christ's name—in union with Him. That the only way to follow the Passion of Our Lord was to be His friend, ready to follow Him even to death, and that the only way to know Him and to be His friend was by Prayer.

Now let us look once more at our Prayers. As we walk through the streets in these early days of spring, and we look in the shop windows, bright with new clothes, we begin to think of our last summer's clothes, and we begin to realise that what we had hoped might be fit to wear again, in the light of the new things that we see, will not be a bit of good, and that we shall, after all, have to throw them away.

So with our Prayers. We have thought they would do, we have thought perhaps that they were the best we could do, but now when we turn a fresh light on them—when we realise that when we pray we must pray in Christ's Name—when we look at

them with the eyes of the friends of Jesus, in the light of His Passion, then I am afraid so many of us must realise that they are not a bit of good, that we must throw them away and start some fresh ones.

And so the disciples realised that they must obey the Divine Command, and " Watch and pray " ; but they felt, as we feel, that they needed help. So they came to Jesus and said, " Lord, teach us to pray," and He gave them a Pattern for all Prayer. He gave them the " Our Father." He allowed men to pray with Him His own prayer to His Father. He allowed us to call His Father our Father, and every time we pray that prayer " He Who ever liveth to make intercession for us " carries it up, however unworthy it may be, however unlettered, unites it with His own, and offers it to the Father if only it be offered in His Name. " Prayer is the wing of the soul by which she fleeth to Heaven. To the end that she may follow Jesus Christ ascending up before us to show us the way."

And all the world over, wherever men are learning to love God, this prayer which Jesus taught to His disciples is prayed. Every branch of the Church has what we call its own Liturgy, its own form of Service, but in every branch of the Church this prayer forms part of it.

It is to be our Pattern for all prayer, for it is God's own statement of the needs of Man. It is divided into seven petitions, and in these seven petitions we shall find all we need to say to God for His own glory, and for our own needs. The first three petitions speak of God's glory : we must *reverence* Him, we must be *loyal* to Him, and we

must be *obedient* to Him, i.e., Hallow His Name, help forward His Kingdom, and do His Will. The last four speak of our own needs: Food, Forgiveness, Guidance, Deliverance. "Give us this day our daily bread," "Forgive us our trespasses," "Lead us not into temptation," "Deliver us from evil."

But not only is the Lord's Prayer a Pattern for all Prayer, it is a Perfect Prayer for all times. There is no time at which we cannot pray it, there is no need it does not voice. There is a beautiful story of a little boy and his guardian angel.¹ He wanted to learn to pray, and did not know what to say, and he asked his angel to help him. And the Angel said, "Go into the library and you will find a shelf full of books that will help you." The little boy went, but he came back in a minute and said he had found the shelf but that all the books were the same—they were all called the Lord's Prayer. And the Angel said, "Yes, that is the only book you need, because you can pray the Lord's prayer in so many different ways. You can pray it in penitence, you can pray it in sorrow, you can pray it when you are lonely, when you are tempted, when you are confused. Tell me how you want to pray it and I will give you the right book."

Again, not only is it a Pattern for all Prayer, and a Prayer in itself, but it is a revelation to us of Our Lord's own private prayers, and we must pray it and use it with special reverence in union with Him. Almost every sentence in it resembles some recorded prayer of Jesus. As we

¹ *The House of Prayer*, Florence Converse.

say, " Hallowed be Thy Name," we remember His " Father, glorify Thy Name." We can picture Him as we say " Thy Will be done," kneeling under the trees in the Garden of Gethsemane, in an agony of prayer, yet saying, " Nevertheless, not my Will but Thine be done." " Give us this day our daily bread " reminds us of His upward look to Heaven as He multiplied the loaves for the hungry multitude, and made just what they had, sufficient. " Deliver us from evil " is an echo of His " Keep them from the evil." There is only one clause in the whole Prayer which, because He was without sin, He never needed to pray, but it rang out for us from the Cross as with His dying breath He pleaded for His enemies : " Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

Once again, it reminds us of *when* He prayed, and one of the things that we must at once notice if we follow His Passion with any care is that just at the very times when we are most apt to give up our prayers Jesus Christ prayed so earnestly. When we are in sorrow, when we are tempted, when we are lonely, when we are sorry, when the way is dark—just those times when we are most apt to give up, see how he prayed. In bitter sorrow spiritual and mental, in the Garden of Gethsemane, " My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me," etc. In loneliness on the Cross, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me." When brought face to face with—not His own sin—but the sin of the World, " Father, forgive them."

And now we want to think about the beginning, the first words of that prayer. The very first word

gives us the keynote to all prayer—it must be unselfish, it must not only speak for others as well as for ourselves, but it must put ourselves last.

“*Our Father.*” It reminds us that whenever we talk to God we are never to be entirely wrapped up in ourselves—we are to be large-hearted. The Prayer begins with adoration—worship—but before we may adore acceptably, we must put away all unlovingness—all uncharitableness. *Our Father*—the Father of those we love, the Father of those whom we find it difficult to like; the Father of those who love us, but the Father also of those who hurt us. The Father of those who love Him—the Father, too, of those whom we wish knew and cared more about Him.

That word “*Our*” which Jesus Christ taught us to use marks the difference between the Old and New Testaments. The old Jewish symbol was a Circle, the new Christian symbol is the Cross. What is the difference? Look at the Jewish Circle—it holds only themselves, and is shut up tight. But look at the Christian Cross, it can be produced however far you like to draw it—endlessly, to embrace the whole world; rich and poor, employer and employed, black and white, Christian and heathen, friends and enemies, Germans and Austrians, as well as French and Belgians. The very sign of the Cross is the sign of unselfishness, for the sign of the Cross is *I* crossed out, the figure on the Crucifix is the Figure of Jesus Christ blotting out me.

Our Father. We saw last week, you will remember, that we must follow Our Lord’s example

if we would pray in union with Him, and in His Spirit. And so the very first word helps to make prayer easier. If we have done something wrong and want to ask God to forgive us, we come with this prayer on our lips. Our Father, the Father of me the sinner, but the Father too of Jesus Christ the Sinless, “ Who died that I might be forgiven, Who died to make me good.” If we are tempted to do something wrong, and we are trying hard to stand against temptation, we kneel down and ask Him to help us—*Our* Father, the Father of me the tempted, but the Father also of Him Who was tempted forty days without sin. Have we quarrelled with some one and find it hard to forgive? Think of the words of the dying Saviour after all the agony of His Passion: “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” His Father and ours—“ Passion of Christ, strengthen us.” Are we sad and lonely when we come to say our prayers? “ Our Father,” the Father of us kneeling sorrowful before Thee, the Father of all those friends at a distance whom we would like to see again, and the Father too of those who have paid the Last Sacrifice, the Holy Dead who have seen His face and whose voices we so often long to hear once more. The Father of the Church at work and of the Church at rest.

Some of you, perhaps, have spent a holiday at Littlehampton. Have you ever made that beautiful excursion to Arundel Castle? If so, I wonder if you remember the glorious window in the Mortuary Chapel in the Park, showing forth the Communion of Saints more clearly I

think than any illustration I have ever seen, than any explanation I have ever heard. I remember going there once in the early summer with a large party of children from one of the Schools at Bethnal Green, when I was feeling very sorrowful—feeling as we sometimes cannot help feeling, that those we loved and who have passed on to the Other Side are a long way off. I went into that Chapel hot and tired after the long uphill walk from the station, and sat down for a moment to rest. And suddenly my eyes fell on that wonderful window, and the whole panorama as it were of the Communion of Saints was unveiled before me. For there are shown the Faithful of the Church on Earth kneeling at the Altar-rails where the Priest offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ links them with, and carries their prayers over to the Waiting Church who are shown kneeling on a higher plane—up higher still through the Saints of the Church triumphant—right up to the Heart of God Himself. “*Our Father*,” uniting through the Sacrifice of the Son every part and person of the Christian Family in one great Communion of Saints.

“*Our Father*”; if we had made the prayer for ourselves, if we have ever tried to pray in our own words, have we not—I am afraid—prayed for *me*, to *my* Father, not for us to our Father? Let us try to realise this unselfishness of Prayer. The words are on millions of lips all over the world at every moment of the day and night. To reach the ear of God the Father those millions of prayers must pass through the heart of Jesus, God the Son, and no selfish desires may pass that way.

" Selfishness cries : My Father, but love cries : Our Father." ¹

2. *Father.* " Our *Father.*" " I believe in God the Father." But what do we believe? At the present day some of the children away in the corners of England think of King George as a wonderful person, in gold and purple, with huge sums of money, living in a beautiful palace, and that is very much what the Jewish people used to think of God, till Jesus Christ came on earth to teach them that God was the Father Who loved every individual one of them as if there were no other, and Who cared about every little trifling event of their daily lives. Then there came to them the wish to see this Father Who cared for them and to see what He was really like. So they said : " Lord, show us the Father," and at once there came the answer, " He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." And the disciples who lived with Him for some months began to realise that this was no false claim but a supreme truth, for as they came to know Him they saw in Him all the holiness, the beauty, the strength, the love, and the perfection which He claimed for God the Father. Then as they lived with Him there flowed forth from Him to them a great Influence which united them to Him, so through Him they came into union with the Father.

But Jesus Christ, God the Son, could only come into contact with a comparatively small number of people on earth. And so after His death and resurrection the Divine Influence poured forth from Him was left for all men for ever. It came

¹ *The Lord's Prayer*, Father Nicholai Velimrovic, p. 4.

upon the disciples like a rushing wind. You know when one person influences another, it is a very part of his personality, of himself, flowing into him. And so when God influences Man, it is really God flowing into Man. The disciples had also learnt that when they had seen Jesus Christ they had seen the Father, but they had also learnt that He was not the same as the Father, and they had learned that when the Holy Spirit flowed into them it was the Spirit of Jesus Christ and therefore the Spirit of the Father, but it was not the same as either of them.

So they had learned the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, and if we say or sing, "Firmly I believe and truly, God is Three and God is One," that is what we mean. But we have got to learn the doctrine of the Creeds from personal experience in our daily lives.

What has been our experience of God. Has He been a Father to us? Do we love and reverence Him so deeply that we shrink from grieving Him? Are we ready to trust Him when things go wrong, when He sends us sadness, sickness or failure? It is only then that we can say "I believe in God the Father," that we can really pray with full meaning to "Our Father."

Again, what is God the Son to us? Is He again only a part of the Creed? Or is He a real Friend? We need Him as a friend Who will go through with us all the way, to Whom we can turn in sorrow and in joy, to Whom we can tell our successes and our failures. We need Him as a Friend so close that we feel He will be hurt by our little sins as well as by our big sins. We must know Him as a

Friend closer than a brother if we are to say in the words of the Creed, " I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord." If we are to pray as only Christians can pray, " Our Father."

The Holy Spirit, too, must not be for us something vague, it must be someone we have actually felt in our lives. Only a few perhaps have felt what the disciples felt, a Power almost like a rushing mighty wind, but there is not one of us who has not felt a faint breath, a purifying Power that they have known to be the Holy Spirit of God.

" His that gentle Voice we hear,
Soft as the breath of ev'n,
That checks each fault, that calms each fear,
And speaks of Heav'n."

So a personal growing experience of the Power of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit can alone make us utter with a real understanding of what it means, " Our Father." We must realise that God is all that a perfect Father can be, that God the Son is all that a perfect Brother can be, and that God the Holy Ghost is all that the Spirit of a perfect Father and Brother can be.

Access to God as a Father was won for us by God the Son, Who by His Incarnation opened for us the Gate—the Golden Gate of Sonship. God is our Heavenly King ; if we had to approach Him as a King we should be filled with a sense of His Splendour, his Royalty and Power. God is our Creator, if we approach Him as our Creator we should be awed by His Strength, His Wisdom and His Greatness. God is our Judge, stern, upright, unbending. But when we approach Him as a Father we feel at once the assurance of welcome

and protection, of undivided and impartial love. We can never feel lost in a crowd. To approach God as a Father will make every part of prayer easy. It will be easy to ask for things as a child from a Father, easy to confess our faults, easy to ask pardon for others. We use the word Father naturally—the Church uses it naturally in her greatest needs. When our soldiers during the Great War were in danger, what was one of our chief prayers for them? “Holy Father, in Thy Mercy, hear our anxious prayer.” For our Sailors, “Eternal Father, strong to save.” The sick and sorrowful, “We commend to Thy Fatherly goodness.” The dead, “Father, in Thy gracious keeping, Leave we now Thy servant sleeping.”

But if we claim to be the sons and daughters of this Heavenly Father, then there is a great responsibility upon us as His children to reflect something of Him—to reproduce Him in the world. We know how it is with our human fathers and mothers, how there is nearly always something in us which reminds other people of them—it may be good, it may be bad. Some habit, some look, some characteristic which makes other people say “How like her father she is, how like his mother he is.” And so we children of God are responsible for showing His likeness to the world. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” But we shall never become perfect, or have any point of perfection in us, by just trying to imitate the perfection of the Father. We have to do more than that—we have to dwell in Him, and He in us, so that His Fatherhood may find a channel in us to pass His likeness on to other

people. That channel can become stopped up, choked by our sins, by our lack of enthusiasm, by our forgetfulness of Him, but it can be cleared, enlarged and kept free and open by constant and patient prayer and communion with Him.

Then again we must reproduce something of the likeness of God the Son; the whole life of God the Son—His Incarnation, His perfect Life of Obedience, His Passion, His Death, His Resurrection, are one long act of Self-sacrifice on the part of the Father. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," Jesus Christ so loved the world that He gave Himself. And each one of us as sons of the Father, in union with Him, must reproduce—show forth—something of this life of self-sacrifice. Every time we make an act of real honest voluntary self-sacrifice we are really and actually showing one of the characteristics of Jesus Christ. We are showing out to the world the character of God. But what does self-sacrifice mean? It does not only mean giving up something—it means more than that. It means to *make sacred*. Every hard thing, every sorrow borne well, everything given up willingly, every temptation conquered, every hard word that you endure bravely, every time you control your temper, every time you refrain from telling a lie, you make of that victory a sacred thing, you make of it an act of self-sacrifice in union with Jesus. It can be offered to God as a continuation of Christ's Passion, in union with His Sacred Humanity. Every time we conquer in that spirit we may say, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

Again we must show something not only of likeness to God the Father, something of His Perfection, something of the Character of God the Son, His Self-sacrifice, but also something of the Influence of God the Spirit. There is no English word which very clearly expresses the meaning of the original Greek word Paraclete, but at any rate part of its meaning is "Comforter."

If we are to claim the right to address our prayers to Our Father, then we must be comforters. It is so easy and yet so hard to show forth not so much by what we say as by what we are, the comfort of the Holy Spirit of God. The gentle pressure of the hand in sorrow, the look of sympathy, the healing touch in pain, the word of kindly cheerful humour, the ring of honest mirth, all are a breath as it were of the Holy Spirit. There is not one of us who cannot in some small degree carry on the comforting work of the Holy Spirit. There is always someone on whom we can exercise this comfort, companionship, help. Is there anything more beautiful, is there anything more worth trying for, than to show forth by our lives, by the expression of our mouths, by the look in our eyes, the likeness of God the Three in One? Don't we know what it is to meet those people sometimes, and how we feel that to be with them even for a little while helps us? Some who seem to radiate the likeness of God, to carry about with them something unspoken, unexpressed, inexpressible perhaps, but yet something which carries a touch of the Divine to other people. Those are the people who have a right to offer their prayers to "Our Father."

III

SECOND WEEK IN LENT

“Which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name.”—
ST. LUKE, xi. 2.

“ WHICH ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY
NAME ”

LAST week we thought about our Prayers again, and we saw that we must make some changes in them, that when looked at in the light of the Passion, with the eyes of the friends of Jesus, they were not a bit what we would have them be. And we found that we must try to pray more *when* Jesus Christ prayed, and *as* He prayed—when He was lonely, when He was in sorrow, when He was tempted—just when we are most ready to give up.

Then we looked at the first two words of the Lord's prayer—the Pattern Prayer—and we found that whenever we talk to God, we must always be unselfish and large-hearted, and pray for others as well as for ourselves. And we also found that in using that word “ Our ” we were acknowledging our belief in the Communion of Saints, that “ Our ” Father means the Father of the Church on Earth, the Father of the Waiting Church, and the Father of the Church Triumphant.

Next we thought about the second word, “ Father,” and we found that when we say we believe in God the Father, we mean that we believe in the Three Persons of the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and that if we are to be worthy to be called God's

children we must reproduce Him in our lives—show something of the likeness of God the Father, something of the likeness of God the Son, and something of the likeness of God the Holy Spirit.

To-night we are going on a little further—we are going on to find that we know something more about this Father Whom we approach in Prayer. " Our Father which *Art* in Heaven." He is something more than a Father—He is a Heavenly Father, an Eternal Father.

We may have lost our earthly father ; or we may have one now, but shall not have him all our lives ; or he may have died before we were old enough to know him, and we are not able to remember anything about him. He may be a good father—he may be a bad father. But our Heavenly Father we always have. The Father of our great-grandparents, the Father of the ages to come. " Our Father which *art*." Not only the Father who made us, Who gave us life, but Who is keeping us now. It is one of the great present tenses of the Bible. *God is Love, God is a spirit.* We may change, our Father never. He may be a glad Father, He may be a grieved Father, it rests with us ; but He was, is, and will be " Our " Father always, " the same yesterday, to-day and for ever."

From the first moment that we are able to realise the existence of God and to pray to Him, until the last moment of our lives, we can be perfectly certain of always having with us, watching over us, caring for us, helping us, and guiding us, our Heavenly Father.

When a child first goes to school it is often so lonely, so unhappy, at being separated from its

father and mother, but this Heavenly Father is always with us, at school and at home.

When we first go to work, too, we feel just the same loneliness separated from our parents, and it is then that we must cheer ourselves with the remembrance that we still have with us "Our Father which *art*."

"*In Heaven*" gives us just the needful reminder, checks all undue familiarity, and reminds us of His glory, His greatness, and His holiness.

Hallowed be Thy Name. Having opened the Gate of Prayer with the magic words "Our Father," we come now to the first Petition—that we may *reverence* His Name. And shall we not reverence it? Is it not the Name that assures us of the gift of Sonship, that means for us the joy of Brotherhood—that bestows on us the comfort and help of the Spirit of the Father and of the Son?

In the days before the coming of Jesus Christ the Jews held the Name of God in such high honour that they would not mention it out loud; if they came to it in reading they passed it over unspoken. The Mohammedans would not tread on the smallest piece of paper lest it should contain the Name of God. Just as when we think of the world's great names it reminds us of all that they have been and all that they have done—Kitchener's name reminds us of a man of wonderful power and magnetic influence, who was able to send a million men out voluntarily to France; Nelson reminds us of the heroism of a man; Florence Nightingale of the self-sacrifice and devotion of a woman: when we think of them we

think of what they did; so the Name of God stands for us as the Almighty who created us from nothingness, as the Name of the Perfectly Compassionate Who gave His only Son to save us from our sins. The Name of God includes all that He is and all that He has done.

And there are two primary ways in which we must honour and show our reverence for the Name of God—1. In our Worship, and 2. In our lives. Let us believe and hold all that is true about the Name and Character of God, and let us show our reverence for it in our lives.

1. *In our Worship.* Have you ever realised that the very ornaments of our Church and the way we care for them are all part of the Hallowing of the Name of God? Surely the more beautifully a Church is kept the more we feel sure that the Name of God is worthily worshipped there. If we read that thrilling account of the building of the Temple in 2 Chronicles iii. and iv. we shall see how King Solomon sent far and wide to procure everything of the very best for the furnishing and beautifying of God's House, and we shall see too how the present-day furniture of our Churches is a copy—though sometimes a rather poor copy—of the original furniture of the Temple: the altar, the candles, the sanctuary lamp, the oil for it, all are mentioned there. And all the gifts that are given to our Churches are dedicated—blessed—to the Glory of God, because His Name is so revered that we do all we possibly can to beautify His House, the place where He comes.

The more carefully you tend your Church and keep it supplied with beautiful flowers, and the

more regularly you clean your sanctuary lamps and are careful to keep them filled with oil, the more you show your remembrance of the reverence due to God—little simple acts which in time may begin to be felt as something of a tie in your busy lives, but yet made sacred if they are done for the hallowing of God's Name.

Do we remember always when we come into Church that we are entering God's House, the place where His Honour dwelleth? If we do we shall enter very thankfully, very humbly, very quietly. We are coming as children to Our Father's House, and the response of children to a Father's claims is best expressed in childlike reverence. Reverence means recognising God's greatness. Reverence consists of love and awe; it is awful love, or loving awe. Love as we think of His Tenderness, awe as we think of His Holiness.

When we kneel down, do we remember that we are in His House and that every action of ours in the House of God, every thought of ours in the House of God is either honouring or dishonouring His Name? Have you ever realised how you would feel if you received an invitation to Buckingham Palace; how anxious you would be to be tidy, how anxious you would be to be polite, how anxious you would be to be in time, how anxious you would be to stay as long as possible, to learn as much while you were there about King George, and his way of living, and his doings, as you possibly could? And yet is there any one of us, I wonder, who does not know what it is to come into God's House roughly and hurriedly, with hair unbrushed and boots uncleaned. To

leave it till the last minute, to wait until the bell stops, and often to rush in late and to leave again at the first possible moment at the end of the service. No, that is not the honour due to God's Name, that is not hallowing His Name. God forbid that we should ever stay away from Church because our clothes are shabby, some of us would hardly ever go at all. It is far better to come to Church late if something has really prevented us from coming early ; it is far better, it is a real act of hallowing His Name, to come to Church wet and muddy on a bad day. But it is a real act of dishonour to His Name to come to God's House with our hair untidy because we did not want to get up in time to brush it ; to come to Mattins in time for the Psalms, or to the Holy Communion in time for the Creed because we were sitting over the fire at home reading the newspaper ; or to come to His House in beautiful fine weather with last week's mud on our shoes. Our appearance as well as our behaviour in Church are a silent but a very powerful witness to our degree of friendship with God, to the place we give Him in our lives.

Always give the best of yourselves to God. The true idea of worship is that of an offering made by man to God, the object of worship is to give and not to get.

And then besides the ornaments for the worthy worship of God in our Churches, besides our own worship of Him, and besides our own appearance when we worship Him, there are our own personal acts of worship in Church.

We kneel for prayer to show humility ; we stand for praise to show resolution ; we sit for instruc-

tion, for the reading of the Bible, or for sermons, that we may give our undivided and untired attention. We kneel together, we stand together, we sit together.

But besides these actions on the part of the whole congregation there are our own personal outward acts of worship, the little things which some of us are rather afraid of doing, but which when we come to understand them we find are to show greater reverence to the Name of God. We know all these extra external acts of reverence are called Ritual, and the people who use them are called Ritualists. But do we even know what Ritual means?

Ritual means, in popular speech, nothing more nor less than the worship of God with our bodies, while our souls worship Him in prayer. And surely as we come to know Him and to love Him we must want to worship Him with every part of our being—body as well as soul.

Dr. Liddon said, "The reverence of the soul is best secured when the body, its companion and instrument, is reverent also. To see God is to feel it to be an imperious necessity to kneel before him. 'O come let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker' is the voice of true reverence for all time."¹

We belong to God, our whole beings belong to Him, our souls and bodies; and so the worship of God demands the attention of our whole being; it demands that we should show Him outward as well as inward reverence. But just because the soul is man's highest part and the body is man's

¹ Liddon, *Easter Sermons*, xxviii. p. 158.

lowest part, so the worship of our souls is far more important than the worship of our bodies, and all the worship of our bodies is no good unless it expresses the worship, the beliefs, the reverence of our souls within.

Again, if we come into Church and bow our heads towards the Altar, if we kneel when we approach the Altar after the Prayer of Consecration, if we kneel at the mention of the Incarnation in the Creed, if we bow our head at the name of Jesus, or if we make the Sign of the Cross, just because we see other people do these things, and without knowing why, that is not reverence at all, that is not hallowing God's Name, it is only mockery. And a great writer in the English Church says this: " It is a good rule to make that a person should refrain from the use of any ceremonial act of which he does not know the meaning. And . . . it is simply imperative that one who uses ceremonial in public worship should be sincerely in earnest in endeavouring to lead a holy life."¹

There are no doubt some people who feel that they have no need of these outward forms, some holy souls whose hearts are so full of the worship of God, so tuned to the music of His Name, that they feel they have no need for the worship of the body, that it would be for them more of a disturbance than a help. But, on the other hand, for most of us whose minds are always so busy with earthly things the worship of the body is a real help in keeping our souls fixed on God ; it pulls us together to make these little actions reverently with our bodies. But we must be careful never for one

. ¹ Vernon Staley, *The Practical Religion*, p. 278.

moment to imagine that those who do not make them are less reverent than those who do. Not one of these things is necessary to salvation, the love of God in our hearts and souls is what matters, and different people will express their reverence in different ways simply because they *are* different.

Some people when they come into Church, as they cross the centre to reach their seats, bow to the Altar. Why? Because it is God's Throne, the place where He Himself comes. In the House of Lords every member of the House as he passes the king's throne bows, but when the king himself is there present they kneel and do homage.

I wonder if any of you ever went to a picture palace and saw the pictures of the Indian Durbar, when all the chiefs and clansmen came to greet King George there present on his throne! If so you will remember how each Indian as he approached the king knelt down on one knee as an act of homage before he came quite close. And so those of us who, after the Prayer of Consecration, kneel on one knee before we go up to the Altar do it as an act of reverence to Him Who is indeed actually present there under the Forms of Bread and Wine. We are hallowing His Name.

Again, when we bow our heads at the Name of Jesus we are carrying out the spirit of St. Paul's words, "At the Name of Jesus every knee should bow." But we must only bow our heads as we realise in our souls that it is the Name that spells for us salvation. And in the same way we bow our heads at the words, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," in honour

of the Blessed Trinity, before whose presence the angels cover their faces.

Then some people kneel down in the Creed at the words, " Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary." Why? Because their souls are so overwhelmed with the wonder and the greatness of the fact that Jesus Christ became Man to save us from our sins ; they acknowledge it as the supreme truth on which the Christian religion rests ; and just because their souls are full of awe and reverence, so they make an outward act of reverence with their bodies too.

If we make the Sign of the Cross, the sign of our salvation, the symbol of the Christian faith, we are only hallowing God's Name by using it, if we remember what it means and make it as an act of faith in Jesus Christ. Have you ever seen that beautiful War picture—I saw it first among the photographs in the *Daily Mail*—of a young British officer marching at the head of his men past a wayside Calvary in France, and as he passes he gives the order, " Eyes Right ! " Just so when we use the Sign of the Cross, when we look at a Crucifix, or pass a Calvary let us try always to make an act of recollection. Halt—pause—eyes right ! It is the Sign of our Salvation. The Sign of the Cross may be used at all times to remind us of Jesus. We make it from the forehead down, and from the left shoulder across to the right. Have you ever wondered why ? Why should we not make it from the breast to the forehead and from the right shoulder to the left ? Because it means something. The Sign of the Cross is the

reminder that Jesus Christ came down from heaven to earth (so we make it down), descended into hell, and rose again to ascend to the right hand of the Father, where He ever liveth. (So we finish the Sign of the Cross on the right.)

There is so much more we might say about Hallowing the Name of God, but time passes, and we must turn to that second way in which we Hallow the Name.

2. *In our Lives.* In our earthly life how often we hear the expression when a child has done well that it has done credit to its parents. How often some characteristic of the father is recognised in the child, and it is said she is following in father's footsteps. So in our spiritual life by every action and word we bring either honour or dishonour on the name of God. If we live honestly, carefully, lovingly, we are honouring God. If we live dishonestly, carelessly, speak lies, and use bad words we are dishonouring the Name of God.

Not only in our prayers, our worship, our Confessions, our Communions must we honour the Name of God, but by every action and habit of our daily life. Everything depends on it. Do we honour His Name in speaking it, and do we realise that every time we use it carelessly, every time we say a wrong word, an impatient word, above all an untruthful word, we are dishonouring, dishallowing His Name, because we are bearing witness against Him Who bore it?

In our amusements do we try to choose those which He can bless; do we try to read books that speak reverently of Him? Do we try to have for our friends those who love Him and with whom

we can speak of Him ? Do we do our daily work as those who are the friends of Jesus ? Do we try to make our homes more like the Pattern Home of Nazareth ? All the worship of our bodies, all our regularity at Church, all our prayers, all our Communions, all are of no good unless we are using the strength gained by that worship, through those prayers, in those Communions, so to live our daily lives, so to reproduce as His children some likeness, however faint, of Our Father, that other people shall be led through us to hallow His Name, to know His Name is Holy. All the religion and all the worship will avail us nothing in the Day of Judgment without the witness of our lives ; the Sign of the Cross in our worship must be the reflection of the Sign of the Cross on our lives, or in spite of all He will pass us by and say, " I know you not."

We must so live that all who see us shall learn something more about God, and His Name, and the beauty of Holiness. It ought not to be necessary to have to say we are Christians. Something in our very atmosphere and temper should show that we belong to God and have been with Him. All the worship is no good without the life. People who see us worship well and regularly will expect to see the results of that worship in our lives. Let every word we say hallow the Name of God. Let the Name of God on our lips sound as something of priceless value to us. Let every action show something of reverence, and then if our words and our actions show it, it will follow that our lives will show it too.

Further, God's Name must be hallowed by us

just wherever we are and whatever we are doing. We so often think we could love Him better if our lives were different. If we had less to do we could worship Him so much better. If we did not have to start so early for work we could say so many more prayers before we went. If only we were not so tired at night we could give Him more time and a clearer mind then. If only we worked with people who loved Him better and spoke more reverently of Him it would be so much easier to be good. If only we had not to help so much at home we could go to Church more often. If only the other people in our homes were more patient we should not be so angry and so often use His Name carelessly. But no. That is all wrong. If we are going to follow Jesus and be His friends we must be cross-bearers. To-day¹ is set apart by the Church in commemoration of St. Edward, King and Martyr, and the Gospel selected for his commemoration begins with these words: "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me." That is His call to His followers all through the ages. He comes to us and says, "Be Mine here, hallow My Name here, just where you are, and by what you are doing, with those with whom you live." And if we answer that we cannot be holy here, we cannot serve Him just in whatever we have to do, then we are shirking the Cross, without which we cannot be holy anywhere, for He Himself has told us that cross-bearing is the only way to holiness.

And so, "Hallowed be Thy Name," in our worship and in our lives. Worshipped in our bodies

¹ March 18th.

as an expression of the worship of our souls. Hallowed in our lives as the outcome of our worship. So hallowed in our lives that others may come to hallow the Name of Our Father.

I could not help thinking as I sat in St. Alban's, Holborn, last night, of the founder of those Monday evening services, Father Stanton, who honoured the Name of God, both by his worship and in his life, wherever he was and whatever he was doing, as surely God Himself would have us hallow it. I remember going to one of his Monday night services and finding the Church crammed as it is now, only that nowadays it is crammed with a rather severely respectable lot of people who for the most part have learned how to worship God and are trying to hallow His Name in their lives. Then it was crammed with a regular rabble—crammed right up to the altar steps and all over the floor of the chancel with people who did *not* know how to worship God, people who did not seem ever to have been in a Church before. Father Stanton would get up into the pulpit, and then in a loud and rather ugly voice would lead the Magnificat. But such was the influence of his personality, such was the power of his own personal reverence, that when he came to the words, " And Holy is His Name " there was a pause and a hush all over the Church, and every head—heads that one would think had never been bent in prayer before—were bent with him in hallowing the Name. It was a wonderful illustration of the power of the worship and influence of one really holy man over other people. So was his funeral, not so very long afterwards,

when I stood in Kingsway with a dense crowd, just such a crowd as would have gathered for a royal progress. But far more wonderful, for the crowd instead of standing and waving as they do for royalty, fell on their knees—many of them—as the simple hand-bier passed, in loving reverence to one who, though he never rose beyond the rank of a London curate, had always in his worship and in his life so hallowed the Name of his Lord and Master, so reproduced the likeness of Our Father, as to be given by the crowds of the streets of London an almost royal passing. Such a thing has, I should think, never been heard of before or since.

Do let us try as we have never tried before so to reflect this God Whom we are trying so hard to learn more about ; so to reproduce something of His Holiness both in our worship and in our lives ; to make Christlikeness so attractive that somebody else—at least one person—may be led through us to want to be holy too.

IV

THIRD WEEK IN LENT

"Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done as in Heaven
so on Earth."—ST. LUKE xi. 2.

“ THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE ON
EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN ”

THE second and third petitions—that we may be loyal in the War for Right over Wrong, and that we may be obedient to God’s Will for us, whatever that may be.

The two petitions go together—the first is dependent on the second, the second is the great machinery to create the first. For the Kingdom of God can only come on earth when every member is doing the Will of God—the Will of God done obediently by each is the only means which will end in bringing all into the Kingdom, for the Kingdom of God is nothing more nor less than a united body of people each doing His Will.

Each and All : there can be no Heaven for All until there is Heaven for Each ; just according as each makes goodness his one great aim and object in life, just so soon and no sooner will life become good. And each time we send up that prayer for the Kingdom of God to come on earth it must be coupled with the prayer that the Will of God may be so done as to make it possible.

Let us take the second part first, so that out of it and by using it we may create the first.

“ Our Leader calls ; we plunge into the fight,
And shout our battle-cry : ‘ Thy Will be done.’ ”

That we may know and do the Will of God is the life-work of the Christian. At our baptism our

god-parents promise for us, that we will keep God's Will. " Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy Will . . . ? "

The Will of God for *each* one of us is not the same, but the Will of God for each one of us is to do just exactly what He tells us. And although we cannot learn it in a moment, yet we are to spend our whole life searching for it, and accepting and doing it not only obediently but thankfully as it is revealed to us, in union with Him Who said, " My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work. "

There is one great thought which—however hard the Will of God may seem to us, however impossible of fulfilment—will help us to do it. I mean the thought of His personal need of the will of each separate one of us. " He *wants* us. " What was it at the beginning of the War that made men leave their homes and everything they held most dear and go to fight for the King ? How were the recruiting posters worded ? They did not say, " Go, for it is your duty, " or " Go, to save your country. " They said, " Go, your King and country *want* you. " It was the fact that each several individual one of them was needed that made men ready to volunteer to do the King's will, and then when they had enlisted, it made them ready to do the king's will to the utmost of their power—unto death if necessary. You will remember too how Lord Kitchener with his wonderful tact sent them each a little message to take abroad with them, and that part of the wording was this : " Remember that the honour of the British Army depends upon your individual con-

duct." And how wonderfully those soldiers did the Will of God—by little acts of kindness on the battlefield just as much as by those heroic deeds which won for some of them the V.C.

Some of you may have heard that beautiful story of the two soldiers—an English soldier and a German soldier—lying side by side grievously wounded. The English soldier heard the groans of the German soldier, and after painful struggles turned over on his side and reached his water-bottle. He shook it, and finding there was a little water left, he managed to get it to the lips of the German soldier. Could God's Will be more perfectly or more completely done? Or again, a wounded French soldier seeing a chaplain near concluded it was a Roman Catholic priest, and begged him to give him his blessing and to hold the Crucifix before his eyes. The priest was in fact a Jewish Rabbi, but nevertheless he bent over the soldier, blessed him, and held the cross where the man could see it, and in the act of doing so was shot and killed. That is doing the Will of God. To do every little act of kindness, to speak every word of love that is put into our minds by Him.

But then some of us grow restive, we fret at having to do God's Will painfully and always; there seems to be no holiday, no rest, but always self-denial. And we point in desperation to our Lord's Own Passion, and we are tempted to say that even Jesus Christ Himself in His Prayer, "Nevertheless, not My Will but Thine be done," only accepted that Will for the few hours of His agony in the Garden. And we forget that He was

then only asking for additional strength to do in a time of special trial what He had already promised to do for all eternity when He said, “ Lo, I am come to do Thy Will, O God.” No, to do the Will of God is a life-long task.

Is it the Will of God for us that we should be placed in the midst of great temptation? Then in union with Him Who resisted all temptation, let us seek to do that Will. Is it His Will that we should be sad? Jesus was often sad. Is it His Will that we should be weary? He was weary too. That we should endure humiliation and scorn? “ Herod and his soldiers mocked Him and set Him at nought.” His Will for us, however hard it may be, can never be harder than those things He bore for us. And then we go further—we add, may this Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. And who does the Will of God in Heaven? We think at once of the service of the Angels, who serve God day and night. But we forget that there is one of our race there too—not an Angel but a Man—doing God’s Will in Heaven, Who entered Heaven to appear in the presence of God for us, and then we realise that in praying that God’s Will may be done on earth *as* it is in Heaven, we are asking no less a favour than that we may learn to do His Will just as perfectly on earth as Jesus Christ is doing it in Heaven.

But now to-night¹ by a curious coincidence—I wonder if any of you have noticed it—it is the day of all days in the year to think about the Will of God, because it is the day set apart by the Church in remembrance—in honour—of the one human

¹ March 25th.

being Who did the Will of God most completely, most obediently and most thankfully here on earth. You know who I mean—the Blessed Virgin Mary. Because to-day is the Feast of the Annunciation, and the Annunciation—a long word—only means the day on which the Angel Gabriel came to her to *announce*—to make known—to her the Will of God for her. A Will so great, so strange, so extraordinary that for the moment she was troubled with a natural and very human fear. But then immediately she shows us a perfect submission to that Will. “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy Word.” And not content with perfect obedience and submission she went to the house of Elizabeth and there she gave utterance to that perfect song of thanksgiving—the Magnificat. Always remember, when you think of the Virgin Mary, that she is the most perfect example of obedient, instant and thankful submission to the Will of God.

There seems to cling to us an old-fashioned fear lest we should show too much honour to her who was not only a perfect pattern of whole-hearted surrender to the Will of God, but who was also His Mother. But let us be very careful lest for fear of showing her too much honour we rob her of that which is her due.

I remember once passing a theatre where some big performance was taking place in aid of a war charity, and there was a royal carriage standing outside and a crowd gathered, so I waited a moment to see who was coming. Suddenly the royal servants took off their hats and held them in their hands, and I made sure the king

himself was coming, but I found that it was not King George, it was his mother—the Queen-Mother, Queen Alexandra—who was received with the honour due to the Royal Family. On the other hand when King George enters the throne-room, or any other room on a state occasion, Queen Alexandra with all the other ladies present must rise to receive him. Even the Queen-Mother is of less importance than the King himself, and must in common with others do homage to his kingship. He alone has the power to make laws and to repeal them, to pardon, to remit punishment, and to grant petitions.

And if it is thus with Queen Alexandra, then cannot we realise and practise a little more of the honour and the homage due to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Mary the Queen-Mother—the Mother of the King of Kings? To the King of Kings solely and alone belongs the power to declare His Will for us, and to demand its fulfilment ; to Him alone belongs the power to forgive sins, and to answer prayer ; but just because of the awe and majesty of His Divine Power, then surely of her to whom was given the honour of being His earthly Mother, the Mother of His Human Nature, we may indeed and rightly echo the angel Gabriel in saying, " Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus," for as our own Bishop Ken says in his beautiful hymn :

" Heaven with transcendant joys her entrance graced,
Next to His throne Her Son His Mother placed.
And here below, now she's of Heaven possest,
All generations *are* to call her blest."

Most of you, I think, will agree thus far, but then, perhaps, some one will say, "Yes, I understand and believe all that, but then on to the end of that Angelic Salutation—that Hail Mary—you add some further words, you say, 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.' That is what I am not sure about."

Now a young man wanted to ask a favour of a Bishop, and he did ask it, and the Bishop promised to do what he could for the young man. Then the young man, because he was specially anxious that this favour should be granted, sought to find someone who would back him up and help him to win it, and finally decided to ask the Bishop's private chaplain also to ask the Bishop to grant this favour, and he chose the chaplain because he thought he lived with the Bishop and saw so much of him. If you want some one to do something for you, and you want it very badly indeed, do you not often go to someone who knows that person very well—better than you do—and ask them to say a word for you. And just in the same way if you are very anxious for God to do something for you—to forgive you a great sin, to give you a great gift—does it not then just seem perfectly natural that you should ask some one who knows Him better than you do—some one who lives close to Him—to unite their prayers with yours that He may do what is best for you? And can we imagine anyone who lives closer to Him and knows Him better than the Blessed Virgin Mary—His own Mother? Never, never may we pray to her, ask of her what it is in God's Divine Power alone

to bestow ; never, never may we give to her or to anyone else the honour which is His right alone, but surely bearing that always in mind we may helpfully and rightly ask her : " Holy Mary, Mother of God," who must live so very close to Him, to blend her prayers with ours and to " pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

" Let us weave our supplications,
She with us and we with her.
For the advancement of the faithful,
For each faithful worshipper.
For the doubting, for the sinful,
For each heedless wanderer.

" For the sick and for the aged,
For our dear ones far away,
For the hearts that mourn in secret,
All who need our prayers to-day.
For the faithful gone before us,
May the Holy Virgin pray."

We want all the help and wealth of prayer that we can possibly get ; let us not lose any of it through misunderstanding, this want of understanding. And if we may ask the Blessed Virgin Mary to pray for us, surely that admits us to the right and help of the invocation of all the Saints, never, never asking them to do for us what God alone can do, but asking those of His household, those who have " come through great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb " to unite their prayers with ours to Him to Whom " All flesh shall come." Just as no one can be better acquainted with the trials and sometimes even the earthly shame which comes to those who do the Will of God, so

surely there can be no one who will sympathise more readily with our longing to be obedient, no one more able to pray for all the courage and the self-sacrifice we need to keep us obedient than St. Andrew, who at the call of Jesus "turned from home and toil and kindred, leaving all for His dear sake." No one who will more readily understand our doubts than St. Thomas, no one who can better enter into our sorrow, and our difficulty in being true, when by a lie or a wrong word we have denied Our Lord than St. Peter, who denied Him thrice. No one better able to ask for us all that we mean by our desire to reproduce the Holy Spirit of God in our lives by being comforters than St. Barnabas whom the Bible itself speaks of as "the Son of Consolation." So while praying ceaselessly and earnestly to God *alone* that He will show us His Will for us and give us grace and power to fulfil it as faithfully, as thankfully, and as obediently as did she—His Mother—whose festival we are keeping to-day, let us at the same time remember all those who have so perfectly fulfilled it here on earth that they are doing it now in His presence in Heaven. Then, and then only, shall we be able to pray with any idea and realisation of its true meaning: "Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven."

2. And then we come for a few minutes to look at this other clause, "Thy Kingdom come," and we shall realise now that it is just according as and how the Will of God is done in every human heart, that the Kingdom of God will come on earth. In every heart there is a throne where either God or sin sits as king. The Kingdom of

God is the goal to be reached by each doing the Will of God.

And the whole aim of our Lenten stocktaking must be that we shall before Easter find out where we are failing to do the Will of God, what it is that we are holding from Him by our own self-will. Then in our preparation for our Easter Communion, having confessed to Him all that we have found that is contrary to His Will, we may stand up once more, having laid our own will at the foot of the Cross, where we know that by the Infinite Merits of the Precious Blood shed there for us on Good Friday it will be washed away, and say from the bottom of our hearts—hearts that, please God, have gathered for themselves some of His Divine Strength—“ Thine is the Kingdom, the Kingdom of my heart.”

“ Saviour, take the power and glory,
Claim the kingdom for Thine own.”

But then the Kingdom of God means something more still—just as the Kingdom of God comes into our several hearts, so we have to act as His messengers and send the news of that Kingdom out into the world by our words, by our actions, by our lives. The arms of the Cross have to be gradually extended all over the world till “ the earth shall be filled with the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea.” And this is largely done through the example and the work of those in whose individual hearts the Kingdom of God is already established. It is not to all of us or even to many of us that the call comes to be His missionaries in foreign lands, or even to devote our

whole time here at home to missionary work for Him ; perhaps not to a single one of us will that call ever come. But there is not one of us who is not called upon, by the terms of our enlistment under the Banner of the Cross, to work for the furtherance of His Kingdom by our lives, our words, and our actions, just here and now, whatever we may be doing. There cannot be one of us who does not know someone who is without the knowledge of the Kingdom ; someone who knows not God, for whom we must pray that the kingdom of sin may be driven out of the heart, and that in its place there may be set up the Kingdom of Heaven, with Jesus Christ Himself enthroned there.

Just in proportion as we are trying to do the Will of God and to make our hearts His Kingdom, and praying and working and living so that it may come into the hearts of others, can we pray acceptably to Him, and in words that are likely to be heard and answered, " Thy Kingdom come."

V

FOURTH WEEK IN LENT

“ Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins ; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.”—ST. LUKE xi. 3, 4.

“GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD. FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US.”

THIS is the first petition which has to do with man's need—however great the need, the glory of God must come first. And the first thing we want to notice is that our Lord in His Pattern Prayer is careful to choose a word which, while expressing all that we need, is at the same time just a perfectly plain necessity. “Give us this day our daily *bread*.” Now we are apt and—especially perhaps lately during the hardships of the Great War—we were apt when praying those words to take them with no wider meaning than just the mere actual daily necessities for bodily food which have been so difficult to obtain, and of course it is perfectly right and natural that we should ask God to provide us with our daily food.

We must never forget that every fragment of food comes from the hand of God our Father, and that in asking Him to provide us with our daily food we are also asking Him to provide the means whereby our daily food may be produced. Have you ever realised that when you ask God to give you your daily bread you are also asking Him to send the needful amount of rain which shall water the seeds sown, and the needful sun to ripen them—that you are asking Him to provide the labour which shall gather in the harvest and the hands

to bake the bread? You are asking Him to tend the seas and calm them so that those articles of food which come from overseas may arrive safely; you are asking Him—and in these days you ought to be remembering very specially to ask Him—to use His Power and the Influence of His Holy Spirit to guide those who are responsible for the strikes—that there may always be willing hands at the docks and on the railways to distribute that food.

The war has taught us as never before to realise our dependence upon the mercy of God for our daily food, and surely it has also taught us to thank Him for it as never before.

But then “our daily bread” must be taken with a much wider meaning than that—it means everything *necessary* for our bodily nourishment for the day, but it also means everything necessary for us to live the day as He would have us live it, according to His Will. The necessary physical strength, the necessary mental strength, the necessary moral strength, the necessary spiritual strength. This petition follows straight on after “Thy Will be done”; it comes *after* and not *before* the prayer that we may do the Will of God, as if to draw our attention to the fact that we must not only ask that we may do God’s Will, but also that He will give us all that we need with which to do it; and so each morning each one of us as we pray this asks that God will give her just those essential necessary things which shall best enable her to do His Will during that day. We must ask Him to make it possible for us to do whatever our daily work is as He would have it

done. Some of the things which we shall have to ask Him for will of course be different for each one of us. Some may have to ask Him to provide them with the necessary strength to bear long weary hours of monotonously and untiringly doing the same thing over and over again without ceasing. Others may have to ask Him to help them to go from one fresh task to another all day long calmly and collectedly and without getting muddled. Some may want patience to bear the irksome hours of sitting still, others to bear the long strain of standing. Some may have to ask for obedience and humility to do as they are told uncomplainingly, some for the power rightly to command and supervise others.

But then we so often find that God does not apparently answer those prayers of ours. Then it is that we must again remind ourselves that "Thy Will be done" comes immediately before "Give us this day our daily bread," and that He does answer prayer always, but that His answer is to give us what—although we do not realise it—we really want most, the working out of His Divine Plans, His Will for us.

Even in our Lord's own life, if you will think about it for a moment, you will see that twice His own prayers to His Father, which we know were Perfect Prayers, were not answered exactly as He wished, but each time by the granting of something infinitely greater. First, in Gethsemane He prayed to Him that was able to save Him from death, that if it were possible the cup of death might pass from Him. He prayed and yet He died ! God did not grant Him life, but He gave Him

death that He might be the Author of Eternal Salvation and Life.

Again, when He was choosing His twelve Apostles we read that He went into a mountain to pray, and that He continued all night in prayer to God that the right men might be chosen to carry on His work, and we may picture Him praying all through the dark night, carefully reviewing the characters of all the men likely to be suitable for the office, and we can imagine Him saying something like this : " Father, I know that Thou hearest Me always, Thou knowest that I want what Thou wantest—that I want the spread of Thy Kingdom on earth, and that I want to do Thy Will, and just because I want Thy Will, give Me the guidance and wisdom to choose the right men." And yet, after all that night of prayer, one of those selected only a few months later betrayed Him, took money, kissed Him, and then committed suicide. At first it might seem to be a terrible example of a prayer that failed, but no, His prayer was answered, because He was led through it to select one who, although he was not faithful, yet by his desertion was the means which brought about His own death, which was for the salvation of the world. No prayer has ever failed, because God makes use of every prayer to give us not perhaps exactly what we want, what we have prayed for, but what He wants us to have.

Have we not seen that for ourselves sometimes ? Have we not perhaps had some great physical pain to bear, and we have prayed to Him so earnestly that He would take the cup of pain away, but still we have had to bear it, and it has

seemed as though God did not hear, until perhaps long after, when we have wanted to understand pain and to help another to bear it, we have realised that the reason God did not answer our prayer and take our own pain away was that we might have the power of sympathy.

Or again have we, like our Lord, had to choose someone to do some special work, or to help us, or to live with us, and before choosing we prayed long and earnestly that we might choose the right person. Then perhaps after a time the person we chose turned out quite different from what we expected, and we were disappointed and wondered what was the use of prayer. But suddenly God showed us His Divine purpose, which was not that that person should be sent across our path to help *us*, but rather because *they* needed help, and to give us a chance of reproducing for their help some of the Divine Influence of God the Holy Ghost.

So then we are to realise that our daily bread means just the absolutely necessary things we need to help us to do God's Will for *us*. We come up against this *us* again. "Our Father, give *us*. It is the great prayer of intercession. "Give *us* this day our daily bread"—give *me* what I need wherewith to do Thy Will, but give also the necessities to my father, my mother, sisters, brothers, and all my friends, the Bishops, the clergy of my Church. Give Thy mercy to the sick and dying, rest and peace to the dead. Give *us* our daily bread—the Church at work and the Church at rest.

But there is just one more point about this *bread*, it is to be *daily*, and the real translation of

the original Greek word means day by day, or for the coming day. Give us day by day all we need, give us our food for the coming day. Just that which we need for the moment and which will be renewed day by day, and hour by hour, just as we need it and ask for it.

Then of course we must not forget that special form of food, that Heavenly Food, which God gives us in the Blessed Sacrament, in the Holy Communion, when He Himself comes to us in the early morning and gives us “ His own Self for Heavenly Food,” to be our strength throughout the day. In thinking of that Heavenly Food, let us still remember the “ give us ” and make it a great prayer of Intercession again for all we love that they may take and enjoy and be strengthened by that Heavenly Food. Let us think of the younger ones, and ask that they may have a great and worthy longing for that Heavenly Food, so that they may offer themselves for Confirmation and come and share it with us. And if these words are read by any not yet admitted to that Heavenly Feast, let them too pray very earnestly for themselves that Jesus will soon come to them and feed them with that most beautiful and strengthening of all Food, that “ daily bread ” of His own Body and Blood.

The whole full meaning of “ Give us this day our daily bread ” seems to me to be summed up for us both compactly and beautifully in one little simple rhyme. I wonder if you know it :

“ Lord, for to-morrow and its needs,
I do not pray ;
Keep me, my God, from stain of sin,
Just for to-day.

Let me both diligently work
And duly pray ;
Let me be kind in deed and thought
Just for to-day.

And if to-day my tide of life
Should ebb away,
Give me Thy Sacraments Divine,
Sweet Lord, to-day.

So for to-morrow and its needs,
I do not pray,
But keep me, guide me, love me, Lord,
Just for to-day."

II. "FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US."

Now, if we have been going steadily along on our journey from the Far Country, we shall be drawing near to the Father's embrace. We have all surely decided that we will say unto Him, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son." In other words we are sorry, and are going to tell Him so. That is the one condition necessary for the forgiveness of our sins. Directly we approach Him God will not only wait for us, but He will see us a long way off, and will be full of compassion, and will come to meet us. And will put upon us the robe of forgiveness.

We have reached those words in our study of the Lord's Prayer, and I think we must have nearly reached them too in our search for peace with God in our hearts.

bearing His Cross up the steep hill of Calvary, and then the long three hours' agony of Crucifixion in the heat of the noon-day sun with all the agony of pierced Feet and pierced Hands.

As we gaze at those pierced Hands let us be reminded of their loving ministry, bringing health to the sick and ease to the suffering, those Arms which had been outstretched to bless the little children, which had blessed the loaves and fed the hungry multitudes. Have we not sinned with our hands? Have we not done careless work? Have we not been rough? Have we always been gentle with little children? Have we always been ready to do kind actions with our hands? To carry the load too heavy for another? Do we write words of love and gentleness?

Look at the pierced Feet, those Feet that must so often have been weary with errands of love and mercy. The Feet that have never been too tired to turn aside to heal the sick, to comfort the suffering. Have we not sinned with our feet? Have we always been ready to go the errands of mercy—to carry words of comfort to the dying, to carry help to the sick; even in everyday life to go a message for some one who is more tired than we are.

Think of the pierced Heart. Pierced now with the soldiers' spears—but pierced so often with sorrow for our sins—and ask Him to forgive us all the sins of a heart that has not always tried to be faithful, a heart that has not always wanted to be sorry, a heart that has been so full of self and has thought so little of Him. Look how He had to bear a Crown of Thorns upon His beautiful

Head, and think how we have hurt Him, misrepresented Him, with our heads, by our evil thoughts, our unkind thoughts, our want of thought. Remember how His blessed Head was buffeted and spit upon, and yet still wore a look of perfect patience, and think how we have sinned by angry looks, by unkind looks, by discontented looks, by proud looks.

Above all, perhaps, remember when we think how all through the agony of His Passion, through all the indignities, He kept His Mouth shut, and answered never a word, and ask Him to forgive us all our sins of speech, the angry words, the impatient words, the untruthful words, the boastful words, the want of words when a kind word was needed. "Forgive us our trespasses." "Keep us from the unkind word, and from the unkind silence."

The little word still clings to us all through that Pattern Prayer. "Forgive *us*." Do we remember to pray for the sins of others? That others may be brought to seek forgiveness? Do we remember all the sinners of the world? All the prisoners, those under sentence of death, those dying in our hospitals without the knowledge of the Love of God, that they may be brought to repentance. Forgive *us*. We little realise how much our prayers may do for others, even though they be unknown to us. There is a wonderful power in Intercession.

"The weary ones had rest, the sad had joy
That day, and wondered *how*.

A ploughman, singing at his work, had prayed
'Lord, help them now.'

In foreign lands they wondered *how*
Their word had power.
At home, the Christians, two and three, had met
To pray an hour.

And we are always wondering, wondering *how*,
Because we do not see
Some one, unknown perhaps, and far away,
On bended knee."

Then there is something more: "As we forgive them that trespass against us." God deals with us as we deal with our fellow-men. This Pattern Prayer does away with every possibility of our daring to suppose that we can live in His Favour while we are being selfish and ungenerous towards our fellow-men. It is only merciful people who can pray to be forgiven, and it is no good going to "Our Father" to seek forgiveness of our own sins with our hearts full of unforgiving thoughts of other people. It may not be possible for us to give all the warmth of our affection to those who hurt us, it may be that they have hurt us so badly that we can only bear it by not going near them. Still, in union with Him Who even in the agony of His Crucifixion was able to say of His murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," we too must forgive them that trespass against us. So let us remember as we draw near to the Holy Week, when we shall want to do everything that we possibly can for our suffering Lord and Master, that the first joy we can give to Jesus our Friend is to accept freely and faithfully the forgiveness He has won for us by His death. We know our need of it, we know how to seek it, and we know there is no sin too great to win this

pardon if only we are sorry. Then surely once we fully realise that all His Pain was borne to save us from our sins, to win for us the peace of forgiveness, with only the one condition that we must first be very sorry, once we are certain

“ It was our sin, as if no other sin there were,
That was to Him Who bore the world
A load which He could scarcely bear.”

Then we shall do everything in our power to give Him the gift which He would like best, a heart full of sorrow for sin ; and we shall come to the foot of the Cross to win that Pardon which was so freely and so generously won for us on Good Friday—Pardon through the Precious Blood.

VI

FIFTH WEEK IN LENT

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory for ever.”—ST. MATTHEW vi. 13.

“ LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER
US FROM EVIL, FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM,
THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOR EVER AND
EVER ”

ALL through the prayer there seems an obvious reason for the special position of each petition—it is the Pattern Prayer, and therefore every part of it is just where it ought to be, just where we can use it best. And so “ Lead us not into temptation ” follows on now, and there seem to be two clear reasons for its place. 1. Because it is only after we have realised the whole meaning of the words “ Our Father,” after we have learned what it means to reverence Him, to be loyal to Him, and to obey Him, to hallow His Name, to further His Kingdom, and to do His Will, on earth as in Heaven ; after we have realised in all its fullness what our “ daily bread ” means to us, and after we have realised what our forgiveness cost Him, that we can in any way realise what temptation is. We are surrounded by thousands of men and women who never realise temptation at all. If we asked them if they are ever tempted they would laugh. Why ? Because they never think either of sin or of God’s standard of holiness. It is only when we have realised all that we ought to be, only when we have been trying—however faintly—to show something of God’s likeness to the world—that we shall realise what temptation is.

It is only when we try to be good that we realise how bad we are: “ And they who fain would serve Thee best are conscious most of wrong within.” It is only when we realise how far away from God’s Perfection we are that we shall come to see, or even to want to see, the things that are tempting us away from it. Then we shall begin to say with St. Paul, “ The good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do.” The trial of Love—to make up our minds to do something more, to do something better, to do something we have never done before, and then the devil sees, and comes to tempt us. We have gone “ over the top,” and met with all the fierceness of the enemy’s fire—fire which has proved too hot for us, and we have turned back.

Then again, “ Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil ” seems to me to stand just where it does in the Pattern Prayer because—as you will remember—the devil tempted Our Lord after He had spent forty days in special prayer and communion with His Father. Then He was fullest of spiritual power. So it is with us—the devil tempts us just when we are—spiritually—at our strongest. And when is that? Why, after we have confessed our sins to Our Father, and asked and obtained His forgiveness. When we have come forth strong in the strength that comes from Absolution, with nothing between us and God, or when we have just made our Communion and are full of His own strength, then it is that Satan is most anxious to upset us.

We know, over and over again, how it has been when we have just promised at the foot of the

Cross to do better, or when we have come away from the Altar light-hearted and full of gladness, that just because of that very light-heartedness, as it seems, we have been careless and done again the very things for which we have just been so sorry.

We are so apt to wonder why it is that God allows us to be tempted, but we must remember that He has given us freewill. And just because we have the freewill to choose and to obey, so it follows that we must also have the freewill to choose and to disobey. Down in our hearts we so earnestly want to be good, we want to show the likeness of God, we want to be the friends of Jesus, we "want to be as pure on earth as on that spotless shore." And yet we so often yield to temptation.

Then let us remember that so far from being a hardship or a sign that God has forgotten us, temptation is necessary for us if our reverence, our loyalty, our obedience are to be of any value, for the obedience which had not the power to disobey, or the loyalty which had no power to be disloyal, could have no value. Nothing is of any value unless it has cost us something.

Then it is, we must remind ourselves that Jesus Christ was tempted "in all points like as we are, yet without sin." "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience through the things which He suffered." For it is through trial and temptation that obedience is realised.

All His life through Our Lord was tempted just as you and I are. Temptation almost broke His heart as He hung on the Cross. And so we may take for our help the remembrance that when we are tempted

it is because God trusts us to share His Cross ; and the nearer we advance towards Him the more we set our face towards Him, the nearer Home we come, the more we shall suffer temptation. It is no good to cheer ourselves with thinking that the better we become, the nearer we come to God, the easier it will be, because the aim of the devil is to defeat the purpose of God, and therefore the more perfectly we try to fulfil God's purpose for us the more the devil will try to hinder the fulfilment of that purpose.

Let us look for a few minutes at those special temptations that came to Jesus Christ Himself, let us see how He was prepared for them, what they were, and how He conquered them.

How He was prepared for them. He was fresh from prayer and communion with God. He went into the fight with His armour on.

How can we expect to win a victory if we go into the battle unarmed—with our weapons rusty and unused. If we are careless about our prayers, how can we expect to conquer in the fight against temptation ?

That is why we must be so specially careful whatever happens to find time for prayer in the early morning before we start our work. Temptation may follow, often does follow, our holiest moments, the moments we have spent with God, but we are all the stronger to resist it because of them.

But then there is another part of our preparation against temptation. We must not only pray, but—acting on our Lord's own advice—we must " Watch and pray."

You will remember how in the Garden of

Gethsemane our Lord left the disciples to watch while He went on a little farther to pray, and how when He came back He found them all asleep, and how He reproached them for not being on the alert. All our prayers to be saved from temptation are no good unless we also watch. God cannot do His Will in us unless our wills are working with His. St. Paul again warns us : " Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." And again, " Be vigilant, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

We all know the things that tempt us most. Whether we are tempted most to sin with our heads, with our hands, with our feet, with our mouths. Pray, " Lead us not into temptation," but watch too when you come near the place where you are usually tempted. Is there some particular person in whose company you seem to yield most easily to temptation? Pray, " Lead us not into temptation," but watch specially while you are with that person, lest temptation come upon you unawares. " Watch and pray."

And now what were those special temptations which came to Jesus Christ at the end of those forty days of prayer ?

Remember all the time that Jesus Christ was not only tempted these three times with these three great temptations at the close of the forty days of that first Lent. No, He was tempted all His Life, at every step of His human Life, just as we are.

But He did endure these three specifically mentioned temptations :

First, " the tempter came and said unto Him, ' If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' "

Our Lord was hungry, exhausted, and the devil came to Him and said, " If You are hungry, turn this stone into bread. If You are really God's Son, as You say You are, You can do it." And He was alone. He had gone into the wilderness to be alone with God, and there temptation met Him.

So with us—it is so often when we are alone and tired that temptation comes. We are tempted to go somewhere, to do something, to take something that does not belong to us, to read something that we ought not to see, and so because we are too tired to resist, and because there is no one to see us, we yield. Then it is that we want to remember the nearness of our Heavenly Father, and to remember that we are never out of His Sight. " Thou God seest me."

Remember we are never alone if we are the friends of Jesus, the very fact of it prevents our ever being alone. It is the privilege of the friends of Jesus to claim and to be able to rely upon that friendship at every point of the way. The saddest thing we can feel is loneliness, because it proves we have lost touch with Him.

Or again, " Command that these stones be made bread." Command that something hard may be made easy. We dislike the stones, we like the bread. Turn the difficulties into ease and pleasantness. All our temptations to waste of time, to doing bad work, to be late, to do our second best instead of our best are all yielding to the temptation to turn stones into bread. No. Stones are

stones, and bread is bread. Work is work, and play is play. Hardship is hardship, and pleasure is pleasure. And where the stone is God's Will for us we dare not take the bread. Life has often been likened to a journey through a wilderness full of stones, but stones which have been placed there for our good.

Then again, "The devil taketh Him up into the Holy City and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the Temple, and saith, 'If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down.' " It was a temptation which overtook Him quite unexpectedly in the Temple itself. And the devil tempts Him to take His own life then and quickly, and so escape the torment and the suffering and the slow torture of the death on the Cross which was in store for Him. Tempts Him to do His own Will instead of God's Will for Him. Tempts Him to seek His own way into Heaven, and not the way of God's appointment.

And so he comes to us to-day and tempts us to do our own will and not the Will of God. Tempts us to go into paths where we cannot expect our guardian angels to follow and protect us, and above all tempts us to try to go our own way into Heaven and not His way for us. Tempts us to leave the six weeks of penitence imposed on us by the Church and to seek Heaven through "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons." Tempts us to leave the rules of rising early that we may honour Him by coming to His own Service and taking His own Food first, before anything else. Tempts us to seek a religion less exacting, easier to follow, asking for less of our time.

No, we have joined the Catholic Church because

we believe it to be God's own way, and therefore the shortest and the straightest way to Him, and because we believe that in that Church and through her Sacraments we receive just the help and strength we need to lead us to Him. God forbid that we should look down on any other sect, on anybody who is teaching God's Word and doing His Work on earth, but still we do pray, and always will pray, His own prayer, " That they all may be one." One in the Holy Catholic Church, because we believe that she alone is the Divinely appointed Teacher and Guardian of the " Faith once for all delivered to the Saints "; that she alone is fulfilling the Divine Command to the disciples to baptise all nations in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost in her Sacrament of Baptism, and that she is obeying the other Divine Command, " This do in remembrance of Me." in her Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the Holy Communion, the Sacrament in which above everywhere else we receive the strength to conquer temptation.

Then again, " The devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and saith unto Him, ' All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.' " The temptation to shirk the Cross, to worship the devil instead of worshipping God, and to gain worldly fame at the expense of doing God's Will and serving Him alone. Just the same temptation that comes to us now. To get on in the world and give no time to religion. To have a good time. To give up the worship of God and all

the restrictions it places upon our amusements, our books, our friends, our work, and our lives. To go on in our own power and strength doing what we like without having to think of what it is God's Will for us to do.

And we think of our Lord's answer, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Now there is one last point. Our Lord came out of all those temptations unhurt, unharmed. We know it does not mean that it was the end of temptation for Him, for we know He was tempted again. The tempter departed from Him for a season, or, as it is in the margin of the Revised Version, "until a time"—until he should find fresh time and opportunity. And so if we are determined to follow Jesus Christ along the way He trod we must expect temptations, not be surprised at them. No victory can be won without a battle, and every temptation faithfully withstood only leaves us stronger and more definitely on God's side. And in every temptation we have the sympathy and the intercession of One Who has been through temptation.

You will remember how when St. Peter was tried he did not quite fail. Why? Because "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter." And that look was enough. He went out and wept bitterly. Whenever we are tempted, wherever we are tempted, however often we are tempted, the Lord Who was tempted too is looking at us, is sympathising with us, is interceding for us.

Let us never take temptations as a sign that God does not care, that He is displeased with us,

but rather that He does care. He is pleased to invite us to take one step further along the Way of the Cross which He trod. He tempts us because He knows we have the strength to conquer, and He trusts us.

Never mistake temptation for sin. Sin is temptation yielded to, sin is a barrier between us and God, a barrier which must be broken down by penitence before we can draw closer to Him ; but temptation is a trial in the path of the Christian to draw him nearer to God, and it is just when we are tempted that we want to stay close to Him, to pray more often, not less often, to make our Communion more often and not less often, to use the weapons and to gain the strength to resist the attacks of the devil.

And so we want to be very specially careful in these few days that remain to us before Easter, because it is just now that we are making up our minds as we have never made them up before that we will come to Him and say, " For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory," that we will give our hearts to be His Kingdom, that we will claim His Power to forgive our sins, and that we will glorify Him and worship Him " not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to His Service, and by walking before Him in holiness and righteousness all our lives."

There will be a fierce battle, because it is just when we make a definite step towards God that the devil is most anxious to stop us. As the King of Kings approaches His Kingdom, Satan will be more and more anxious to dethrone Him. Watch and pray. Remember there can be only one

throne in each heart, and God and sin cannot share it. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" *for*—because—we want to bring God into His Kingdom, we want to enthrone Him in our hearts, we want to keep Him there for ever and ever. There comes the obstacle again, "*for ever and ever.*"

It would be so easy if it were only to be for the Holy Week, it would be so easy to take Him to our hearts for Good Friday, it would be so easy to hold Him there for a while in the strength of our Easter Communion—but *for ever and ever*. There is the Perfection towards which we are striving—that is the perfection which belongs to God alone—and so long as we are reproducing something of the likeness of the Father, something of the likeness of the Son, and something of the likeness of the Holy Spirit, just so long will our hearts be His kingdom; we shall advance in His power, and show forth His glory. Let us not be tempted again to admit sin to the kingdom which is His alone, let us not be tempted to misuse God's power, nor to give the glory to anyone save God alone.

"Behold, it is better to be the humblest servant in Thy Kingdom than the greatest king in ours. Therefore make us, Father, the servants of Thy Kingdom, Power, and Glory through generations and generations, for ever and ever."

¹ Father Nicolai Velimrovic, *The Lord's Prayer*, p. 24.

VII

SIXTH WEEK IN LENT

"Amen."—ST. MATTHEW vi. 11.

“ THESE THINGS SAITH THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL
AND TRUE WITNESS ”

NOW six weeks ago we began to think about Prayer, and especially about the Lord's Prayer, the Pattern Prayer, and we found that we must try to pray more reverently, more unselfishly, and especially to pray in union with Him, as and when He prayed, when we are tempted, when we are lonely, when we are sorry, just those times when we are most apt to give up. And as He prayed, apart and kneeling down.

We have gone right through that Prayer, and thought about it bit by bit, and last week we seemed to end it up. We have taken not only the whole prayer as given by St. Luke, but the whole prayer as given by St. Matthew as well, and if you compare this Pattern Prayer as given in St. Matthew vi. and in St. Luke xi. you will see that St. Matthew alone has the words, “ For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever,” whereas St. Luke's version stops at “ Deliver us from evil.”

But there is still one more word given by St. Matthew, the word we place at the end of all our prayers, and at the end of all our hymns—I mean the little word *Amen*, so little thought about, so often said carelessly and almost always as a matter of course. We place it at the end of our prayers and of our hymns just as, when writing a letter,

we should end up with a full stop. Yes, but even that full stop has a meaning. What does it mean? It means the end. The letter is *finished*. Amen—then the *Prayer* is *finished*.

"It is finished." Could we arrive at any word more appropriate for the Holy Week, the week which is called *Holy* because it is the week in which we commemorate the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the week in which we watch Him finish His Victory over sin? "It is finished" were His own words on the Cross as He lay dying. Think of all that must have passed across His Mind as He uttered them.

Finished—all the years of teaching and preaching, helping and healing, toil, sorrow and disappointment.

" All that He left His Throne above,
To do for us below.

No work is left undone,
Of all the Father will'd ;
His toil, His sorrows, one by one,
The Scriptures have fulfill'd.

No pain that we can bear,
But He has felt its smart ;
All forms of human grief and care
Have pierced that tender Heart.

And on His thorn-crown'd Head,
And on His sinless Soul,
Our sins in all their guilt were laid,
That He might make us whole."

Finished the temptation, the scorn, the pain. But above all, finished is the work of redemption ;

finished the battle with Sin ; finished the way of the Cross. " It is finished." Amen.

And now we too have to say our " It is finished," our " Amen." Finished these six weeks of our return journey to our Father from our far country ; finished our journey back from our old prayers to newer, better ones. Finished our irreverence, our disloyalty, our disobedience. Finished our desire for what He cannot give us. Finished our pride that would not let us tell Him we were sorry ; finished our weak will that yielded to temptation.

See how perfectly our Lord upon the Cross could say His " It is finished."

" That perfect Life of Love,
All, all is finished now."

He was able to say, " I have glorified Thee on the earth. I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Perfectly finished. Work perfectly performed, sorrow perfectly borne ; His own Will perfectly conquered, temptations perfectly overcome, prayers perfectly said, and He Himself, in His very Death, perfectly victorious over Sin.

Is there going to be anything perfect about our " It is finished " ? Is there anything perfect about it ? Is there anything finished ? The time is nearly over. Six weeks ago we decided to make a start, to start on a journey, for some of us a long journey, for some not so far. It was a journey some of us had already started on ; it was a journey some of us still had to make up our minds to take.

I think we did start. We all said our " I will arise," we all began to turn our faces towards " Our Father " six weeks ago, but are we all going

to arrive at our journey's end this week ; are we all going to say our " It is finished " ? Is it finished ? Is it going to be finished ?

Just as we asked ourselves on Shrove Tuesday what the journey was that we had to take, with six weeks' time in which to make it, so now to-night we ask ourselves, with only two days left, have we finished it ? Because in two days' time we come to Good Friday, and Good Friday is the Death Day of Jesus our Friend, and every friend of Jesus is going to spend the Three Hours of His Dying with Him, and we cannot share His Suffering, watch His Agony, without doing everything in our power to make it less. We shall not be able to bear to watch with Him unless we can do something for Him, and there is nothing we can do for Him which will please Him except to put away just whatever it is that is separating us from closer union with Him. At the end of that Three Hours we must be able with Him to say our " It is finished." Not, as in His case, finished the work, the toil, the prayer, the temptation—that, as it came to Him, can only come to us with death—but finished the struggle against Him. Finished all irreverence, all disloyalty, all disobedience ; finished self-will, finished the pride, the weakness in temptation ; finished with our misrepresentation of His Likeness ; finished our want of prayer. Two days only—and then, if not before, every true friend of Jesus Christ *must* say her " It is finished."

So try to be quiet, and give as much of your time as you can in these last few days to thinking about Him and all He has done for you, and don't be

selfish about it. We are all going to *Our* Father this week, we started Lent with thinking of Our Father, and we end it with thinking of Our Father ; we are going to Our Father this week for ourselves and for each other, asking Him to make ourselves and each other more like Him, more loyal, more obedient, more reverent, more ready to work for His Kingdom ; to ask Him that we may always want just those things that we need to make us more like Him, that we may all be very sorry for all the times and all the ways in which we have hurt Him, and to ask Him to lead us and to guide us all to His own Perfection, even along the way of the Cross.

But then *Amen* has another meaning. It means *So be it*. It is our signature at the end of our Petition. Just as every legal document has to be sworn, signed and sealed at the end ; just as, if we have to take an oath at the law courts, we have to say, " So help me, God," so at the end of our Petition to " Our Father " we set our seal—" So be it." We set it as a sign that we mean to do it. " So help me, God," or, as a Chinaman once beautifully expressed it when he said, " My heart wishes it to be exactly so." And so to-night how our hearts wish it to be exactly so, how we wish to pray better, how we wish to remember God is Our Father, how we wish to show His Likeness to the world, how we wish to reverence Him, to be loyal to Him, to obey Him, how we wish to ask Him to give us always just those necessary things to help us to live our lives as He would have us live them ; above all, how we wish Him to forgive us all our sins and to keep us from temptation in the future.

Amen, so be it, so help us, God. We will make a resolution on Good Friday to live more nearly as His children.

Now you will say that this closing chapter ought to say something about our Easter Communion. So it ought, and so it shall. But we have had to think about Good Friday, just because we want to think about Easter Day, for it is only by following the events of the Holy Week which culminate in the Death of Jesus Christ on the Cross on Good Friday that we can expect to make a good Easter Communion, because death is the only way to new life ; we must die to sin on Good Friday before it is possible for us to share in the Resurrection Life of Easter.

A good preparation for Good Friday, a Good Friday spent with Jesus, is the only means for obtaining a share of His Easter gifts. We must go to Him in His sorrow if He is to come to us with His joy.

And what are His Easter Gifts for us ? Life, life won by His own Death ; fresh strength to live a strong life here and now ; Easter promise of everlasting life ; Easter hope and assurance of a final Easter morning when

" All the graves their dead restore,
Father, sister, child and mother,
Meet once more."

Easter—resurrection—life, the only thing that makes it possible for them to bear the dying bravely, because they know it is but the entrance gate to a more glorious life ; the only thing that makes it possible for us to bear their going bravely, because

we know Jesus Christ by His Death made it possible for us to rejoin them in Everlasting Life with Him.

“ To that brightest of all meetings,
Bring us, Jesu Christ, at last ;
By Thy Cross, through death and judgment,
Holding fast.”

And who were the first people He came to after His Resurrection ? St. Mary Magdalene and St. Peter—to the Penitents, the penitent woman and the penitent man. St. Peter who but a day or two before had denied Jesus three times now had the privilege of being the first of the Twelve Apostles to see Him after He rose from the dead. There is comfort for us—there is hope for us. It was not only to those who had known and loved and never left Him, not to those who had always been loyal and true, but first of all it was to the penitent—to St. Peter who had been tempted, and who had failed because he had not been on the alert, on the watch. He had failed in the Garden of Gethsemane, he had failed in the Hall of Caiaphas, but yet he had won this favour. Why ? Because he had been very sorry. “ The Lord turned and looked on Peter, and he went out and wept bitterly.” He was restored to favour, nay more, to special favour. He put away all his weakness, all his littleness, all his selfishness, all his carelessness, and from the day of the Resurrection—the first Easter Day—he stands out as a great leader in the battle for the Kingdom of God, as the chief and spokesman of the Apostles.

And so everything is still possible for every one of us ; we may have been careless, we may have been selfish, we may have been weak, we may have denied our Lord and Master right up till the last, we may be denying Him still, yet by the Power of the Sacrifice which He made for us on Calvary on the first Good Friday, we have only to go to Him, to tell Him we are sorry, to receive His full and free forgiveness, and we, like St. Peter, may be among the first of those to whom He will come and make Himself known on Easter Day. Amen, so be it.

There is yet another meaning to that little word *Amen*. It comes from a Hebrew word meaning " firm and true." St. Peter, after the Resurrection, after his repentance, was firm and true ; never again do we hear of him doing anything but work with all his power for the promotion of God's Kingdom, doing God's Will and hallowing His Name ; standing out amongst, nay above, all the others, in defence of the Kingdom of God, working for it by his life and example, by his preaching, by his healing, by his teaching, dying in the end a martyr for the truth.

So let it be our one great prayer at our Easter Communion that we too, like him, having said our " It is finished," having sealed our petition for Christ-likeness with our " So be it," may, like him, be not only always, for ever and ever, faithful friends and followers of Jesus, but may stand out among others, may take the lead in the battle for His Kingdom by our words, by our actions, by our lives. Amen, firm and true.

We are, or ought to be, at the end of our journey home to our Father, from the far country of our

bad prayers, and from those other far countries which each of us has found for herself, and which is known only to herself and God. Some of us have reached our journey's end, some of us are just reaching it ; we have come or we are coming to our Father to say unto Him, " Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son." And some of us have felt His embrace, in all its gentleness, in all its love, we have actually heard His priest by His own Divine Command say, " By His Authority I absolve thee from all thy sins," and we have felt an assurance, a peace, and a strength that we have never felt before.

Firm and true, so be it, but have you ever noticed that among the titles of Him Who died for us on Good Friday that He might bring us Easter Life was the title, in Revelations iii. 14, the Great Amen? Some of the most beautiful of His messages to us are set down there under the title of the Great Amen, the faithful and true Witness.

" These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness." It is Jesus our Friend, Jesus the Firm and Faithful and True, Who will come to those of us who are penitent on Easter morning and will show Himself to them, and will fill them with His Firmness, the Firmness that can and did resist temptation ; with His own Faith that trusted His Father from Birth to Death ; with His own Truth, Who is the Truth, true in thought and word, and deed.

Remember Easter is not only for those of us who are confirmed and have the glorious privilege

of partaking of His Heavenly Food, Easter is for us all, all who are sorry, all who want to gain new life and strength, and those of you who are not admitted to His Feast of Love will on Easter Day at any rate be present at the Holy Eucharist, and there you will ask Him to make you and to keep you firm and true ; firm to your longing to be like Him, and to show His likeness to the world ; true to your witness for Him ; true to doing His Will. Remember, though you cannot yet receive Him, He is there present on the Altar under the Forms of Bread and Wine ; you are in His Presence there, and you are to talk to Him as we have been trying to learn to talk to Him in prayer in these six weeks, and to ask Him very specially that if it be His Will you may be brave and strong and come and be confirmed before next Easter, so that you may share with us in His Heavenly Feast.

So try to remember all through this Holy Week the four meanings of Amen. It means " It is finished," finished our witness against God ; it means " So be it, begun our witness for Him ; it means " firm and true," may that witness for Him always be firm and true, and it is one of His own titles, " The Firm and True."

May each one of us say that fourfold Amen, and may each one of us come on Easter morning to the Risen Christ, to Him Who " finished " for us even through death, to Him Who is the Great Amen, the Firm, the True. May we come with hearts empty and clean, and let Him take up His rightful place as King in the Kingdom of our hearts ; and may we ask Him to let us not only stand fast but

advance more and more in His Likeness Who is the Firm and True, that we may be henceforth "All for Jesus."

Amen, so be it, so help us, God—firm and true, our hearts wish it to be exactly so.

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